

# media release

*Colorado Department of Agriculture*

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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(horse owners & event organizers) CDA State Veterinarian's Office, (303) 239-4161 or contact your local veterinarian

### ***Colorado Horse Tests Positive for Equine Herpes Myeloencephalitis***

LAKEWOOD, Colo. – The Colorado State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (CSU-VDL) has notified Colorado Department of Agriculture's State Veterinarian's Office that the horse which was showing signs consistent with Equine Herpes Myeloencephalitis (EHV-1) on 5/14/14 tested positive for EHV-1. The horse was euthanized due to complications from the neurologic form of EHV-1.

A second horse that resided with the EHV-1 positive horse has developed a fever and is considered a suspect case but is not displaying any neurologic signs at this time. This second horse attended some of the same events within the rodeo/barrel racing circuit as the original horse. Because of these developments and the recent history of other EHV-1 cases in other states, the State Veterinarian's Office in Colorado recommends that equine event organizers and horse owners competing in the rodeo/barrel racing circuit exercise extreme caution with regards to the planning and holding of equine events.

“Disease prevention practices and good biosecurity should be implemented,” said State Veterinarian, Dr. Keith Roehr. “Owners should consider the risk for exposure to EHV-1 at upcoming events to be elevated and owners may want to consider keeping their horses at home to limit their individual risk.”

The EHV-1 positive horse and its stable-mates have a history of travelling to events within Colorado over the last few weeks and there is a potential link to other horses that have attended the National High School Rodeo and Colorado Junior Rodeo Association events located in:

- Henderson (April 26-27)
- Eagle (May 2-4)
- Rocky Ford (May 10-11)

The Colorado State Veterinarian’s office is in the process of contacting all Colorado contestants that were involved in these events.

#### Important recommendations:

- If your horse attended any of the above events or has a direct link to a horse that attended one of these events:
  - Monitor its temperature twice daily and report temperatures greater than 101.5 F to your veterinarian.
  - Isolate your horse from others if possible for 21 days past the event.
- Contact your veterinarian if your horse is showing other signs of illness or if you have concerns about its health.
- Limit horse-to-horse contact at equine events.
- EHV-1 can be spread on tack, grooming equipment, feed/water buckets, and people’s hands or clothing. Do not share among horses or clean properly between use.

Symptoms include fever, decreased coordination, nasal discharge, urine dribbling, loss of tail tone, hind limb weakness, leaning against a wall or fence to maintain balance, lethargy, and the inability to rise. While there is no cure, the symptoms of the disease may be treatable. EHV-1 is not transmissible to people; it can be a serious disease of horses that can cause respiratory, neurologic disease and death.

#### **Additional Resources:**

- A Guide to Understanding the Neurologic Form of EHV Infection:  
[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/ehv/equine\\_herpesvirus\\_brochure\\_2009.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/ehv/equine_herpesvirus_brochure_2009.pdf)
- Biosecurity-The Key to Keeping Your Horses Healthy:  
[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal\\_health/2011/bro\\_keep\\_horses\\_healthy.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/2011/bro_keep_horses_healthy.pdf)
- CDA Animal Health: [www.colorado.gov/ag/animals](http://www.colorado.gov/ag/animals) and click on “Animal Health.”

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